

Support for 60 meter band as Emergency Preparedness Venue

This filing in SUPPORT of the FCC's proposed allocation to the amateur service of 5250-5400Kc is with specific reference to the long-running emergency preparedness drill for Amateur Radio operators known as Field Day, scheduled this weekend, as part of Amateur Radio Week, June 16-23.

The event this year for the first time has been opened as a *Pan-American* exercise to encourage participation by hams beyond the United States, to include central and south America as well as the Caribbean region.

Allowing the 5250-5400Kc band to be opened to amateurs and *unfettered by restrictions as to mode or activity* will improve utilization of this spectrum and boost the prospects for having a trained, disciplined corps of volunteers who would be prepared to support or be the primary means of emergency communications.

The 60 meter band that the FCC has concluded would benefit the amateur service is perhaps the best possible portion of the shortwave spectrum to be technically capable of carrying signals throughout the region targeted by this emergency radio drill.

In the near future, perhaps "Field Day" will be utilizing this new 60 meter band, not only among U.S. amateurs enjoying a secondary allocation, but also among hams in other regions as other governments see the merits of expanding their own authorizations to their volunteer communicators.

There is strong support for Field Day from the Bush Administration as seen in this bulletin distributed today by the American Radio Relay League (excerpted):

ARLB037 White House greets Amateur Radio operators President George Bush has sent his greetings to all Amateur Radio operators, acknowledging their role in emergency communications and in generating international good will. The White House letter comes as hams in the US mark Amateur Radio Week June 16-23 and prepare to participate this weekend in ARRL Field Day--an emergency preparedness exercise. "I salute amateur radio operators for your work on behalf of public safety officials," the President said in a letter dated June 18. "I also commend your interest in communicating with persons in other parts of the world and learning about other cultures and countries. Your involvement builds understanding and goodwill around the globe." For the first time, Field Day will be open to participation by amateurs throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. The President's letter acknowledged ham radio's "important role in emergency communications, assisting law enforcement personnel and other emergency services as they carry out their responsibilities."

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As part of what could become an organized and deliberate effort to position this band (when needed) as a *strategic*, regional communications segment, some history of this part of the shortwave spectrum is useful to consider in the **Docket 02-98** proceeding.

There are two frequency zones near this allocation that shortwave listeners have traditionally used for reception of "tropical" and regionally-oriented broadcast stations: The 120 meter band and the 49 meter band.

The tropical band, 2300-2495Kc, has been a source of early hurricane notification, as well as health & welfare communications in the aftermath of such storms. Broadcasters using *Amplitude Modulation* can convey such information quickly to regional populations who are using inexpensive and simple-to-operate portable receivers.

Similarly, the 60 meter international broadcast band, at roughly 4750 to 5060Kc, has been important to people in the tropical zones as well as in the upper reaches of North America, such as Canada's Northern Territories, to receive news and information from the regions. Broadcasters using *Amplitude Modulation* have in recent years expanded their regional audiences thanks to the popularity of "world band" portable radios.

A nostalgic revival in the ham radio hobby has brought about the increased use of *Amplitude Modulation* throughout the shortwave ham bands. There has also been an accompanying rise in technical expertise among hams who are building, restoring, and developing circuitry and equipment using this heritage mode.

The Federal Communications Commission should support the amateur radio operator goal of standing ready to provide emergency communications, including the capability of practicing such communications using *Amplitude Modulation*, by moving ahead with the Docket proposal which avoids restrictions by mode or activity within this secondary allocation.

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